these programmes are in pipeline. They have executed a contract with the Governments of the States like West Bengal, Kerala and Nagaland, for hilly areas, to have a tie up with the State Governments, to have all infrastructure, to find out whether this tele-medicine can be given to them. So, Sir, all these programmes are in pipeline.

Impact of Iraq war and SARS on exports

*375. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:†

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) the quantum of India's exports during the last five years in terms of dollars as well as percentage, year-wise; and

(b) the impact of Iraq war and SARS on the exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Iraq war and SARS on exports

(a) and (b) India's exports during the last five years in terms of percentage growth and value in US million dollar are given below :

Year	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
Export	33219	36822	44560	43827	52234
% Growth	–5.10	10.85	21.01	–1.65	19.18

Iraq war and SARS have not affected India's exports. India's exports in 2002-03 increased by 19.18% and reached a record US $ 52 billion level. In 2003-04 (April—June) also exports increased by 11.06%.

SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, according to a Report of the WTO of 2002, India has achieved 15% growth rate in the export of its merchandise goods which is the second highest after China's 22 per cent among the 30 leading exporting countries in the world. It is true that our exports have increased to US$ 52 billion in 2002-03 from the previous year's level of US$ 43.8 billion. But, at the same time, our imports have also risen from US$ 50.7 billion to US$ 60 billion. Hence, the trade gap has gone up to US$ 7.7 billion from US$ 6.8 billion. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to what step his Ministry is

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Rama Muni Reddy Sirigireddy.

taking or proposes to take to reduce the trade gap which is very vital fo sustenance of our economy.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Sir, let me first clarify that according to the WTO figures, the calendar year 2002 increase was 15 per cent, but during the financial year that we maintain, the increase was 19.2 per cent. But, that is an academic question. The second question which the hon. Member has asked is with regard to the increasing trade gap. Let me mention that the trade gap on account of increased imports, particularly in view of the comfortable foreign exchange situation, is not such a source of worry, for two reasons. One factor which increases the gap is the international oil prices. Now, because of the large volumes of oil imports into India, we have a large import budget. As far as non-oil categories are concerned, our exports are far in excess of our imports. The imports also are primarily restricted not to consumer goods, but to various industrial and intermediate items which are used for value addition and for re-export. In fact, analysis of those import items shows that they are not indicative of imports coming into India, as far as consumer goods are concerned, but they are the result of a larger industrial and manufacturing activity which is taking place in India. For instance, in the first quarter of this year itself, the increased imports in the non-oil category are indicative of a spurt, as far as domestic manufacturing is concerned, because bulk of that raw material is used for the manufacturing activity.

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that the Iraq War and SARS outbreak in China, Thailand, Korea, etc. made other countries to turn towards India to meet their import needs, especially in textiles. If yes, what is the extent of market that India could grab from other countries during the spread of SARS virus and Iraq war and how is it going to sustain the opportunity?

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY : Sir, as far as the spread of SARS virus in some parts of the world was concerned, India, by and large, remained SARS-free, and therefore, though it was felt at that time during the transient period that there was some trade diversion which may have taken place, but the exact calculations of that are not known. As far as the Iraq war is concerned, there was a temporary set back which the global trade received during that period the world over, and this was, in fact, reflected in our exports for the month of April, 2003 when some of our consignments were also stuck up because of the war and ports not being operational.

But after the war, the situation seems to have normalised, and one cannot say that there is any large scale or long term impact of either the SARS or Iraq war that has taken place for or against us.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

FM news channels

*361. SHRI MOTILAL VORA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Ministry has banned the broadcast of news on the private FM channels;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite the ban Private FM channels are explaining the news in their own way and broadcasting them; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD) : (a) As per the terms and conditions of Licence Agreement clause-7 Main Text "the licence is for free to air broadcast of audio on main carrier and data on sub-carrier both excluding news and current affairs and any other services which are under jurisdiction of Department of Telecommunication." And Clause 1 (a) Section - 6 of Tender Document "The licence shall be for free to air broadcasts of audio on main carrier and data on sub-carriers, both excluding News and Current Affairs". Therefore the private broadcasters are not permitted to broadcast news and Current Affairs.

(b) and (c) A complaint dated 11-6-2002 was received through CEO, Prasar Bharati regarding broadcasting of News and Current Affairs on Pvt. FM channel in Mumbai.

The matter was taken up with the company, who had responded that it had happened inadverantly and that they have taken measures to ensure that this is not repeated.

Central Monitoring Services had also been asked to monitor the radio stations in Delhi *viz.*, Radio Mirchy, 93.5 RED FM and Radio City private FM channels for 2 days continuously. Reports from Central Monitoring Services has since been received stating that there was no news programme by either of these stations, for the periods monitored by them on 19-07-2003 and 20-07-2003. Monitoring is being done by the Ministry to ensure that the terms and conditions of licence agreement are adhered to.